

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
November 19, 2012

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, November 19, 2012, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

DR. MONIKA DUTT, MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, CBDHA

Courtesy of Council was extended to Dr. Monika Dutt, Medical Officer of Health for the Cape Breton District Health Authority.

Dr. Dutt requested that Council provide introductions and when doing so advise of their interaction and experience with public health.

Introductions were provided and Council members advised of their experiences with health services under the jurisdiction of the Cape Breton District Health Authority.

Dr. Dutt indicated that her work is more a focus with Public Health Services and working with communities to promote and protect the health of people locally.

Dr. Dutt presented a video which was done in the Yukon which bears similarities to Cape Breton.

A general discussion took place and a number of ideas and concerns were presented, including:

- Salt reduction in foods
- Lack of recreation facilities in rural areas
- Fair play rule implemented by the CBVRSB where it is mandatory to carry 15 players on sports teams
- Farmers markets now held throughout the County
- Cape Breton has great potential for agriculture
- Retaining and attracting citizens
- Lifestyle changes
- Smoking cessation
- Active transportation
- Heart wellness clinic reaching out to rural areas
- Increase in palliative care position south of Smokey
- Working on a small project of low cost that is doable and has a positive outcome
- Leased Parks Canada house for use of medical personnel in the northern area of Victoria County

Dr. Dutt indicated that she has been in her present position as the District Medical Officer of Health since August, 2012. Previously she has been the Deputy Medical Officer of Health for northern Saskatchewan and prior to her present position has been enjoying maternity leave.

Dr. Dutt advised that she wants to get out and introduce herself and get talk on public health initiatives started. As a result she indicated that a number of items she was going address would be saved for a future discussion.

She then presented a power point presentation on public health, the roles local governments can play in influencing health and the next steps which include

- Provincial housing strategy
- Breast feeding friendly initiative
- Active transportation
- Others

Warden Morrison thanked Dr. Dutt for her appearance and indicated that this is the first step in awareness of the role of the Medical Officer of Health and what public health entails. He indicated that Council would like a follow up meeting in this regard and maybe regular attendance at Council to update a couple of times per year.

Dr. Dutt thanked Council for allowing her the time to appear and indicated she would be pleased to attend a future meeting to get into a more in depth discussion on public health services.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

INTRODUCTION – STAFF SGT. CRAIG YORKE, DISTRICT COMMANDER, RCMP

Courtesy of Council was extended to Staff Sgt. Craig Yorke, District Commander of the RCMP for Victoria County.

Council provided introductions to Staff Sgt. Yorke outlining the Districts they served.

Staff Sgt. Yorke indicated that he has been on the job for two weeks now. He has 24 years' experience in the RCMP serving in jurisdictions in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. His most recent posting was a six year posting to Big Cove, New Brunswick. The majority of his policing have been First Nations policing. He indicated that his wife is a native of Sydney and they have two children. They have purchased a home and will be residing in Baddeck and be involved in the community.

Staff Sgt. Yorker outlined the staff complement in the Victoria County District and indicated his focus is community policing. He will rely on his members to be engaged and seen in the communities and schools. He will also be visible in all areas of the County and people will get to know him. His focus will also be on drug trafficking and crime reduction.

He indicated that his staff complement is presently down due to parental leaves and he has met with Superintendent Darrell Beaton and has been assured that there will be adequate resources made available to police the Victoria County District.

RCMP presence and visibility in schools throughout the County was discussed and Staff Sgt. Yorke stated a process will be in place to get a presence in schools. He indicated that his door is always open and he would be pleased to meet with Council at any time.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Staff Sgt. Yorke and advised that he will again be invited to Council at a later date and can expect more questions at that time.

SIGNING AUTHORITY – MUNICIPALITY

Sandy Hudson advised that a motion is required renewing the signing authority for the Municipality. At present the Warden and one of either the CAO or Administrative Assistant sign all cheques. The Warden's signature is a stamped signature and the other signature required is a live signature.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Warden and one of either Sandy Hudson or Heather MacLean be authorized to sign on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES – OCTOBER 1 AND NOVEMBER 5, 2012

Warden Morrison presented the minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council for October 1, 2012 and November 5, 2012, for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of October 1, 2012, and November 5, 2012, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up a recent article in the *Chronicle Herald* concerning speculation of the initiation of a Task Force on rural Nova Scotia. The article indicated that Acadia University President, Ray Ivany, would be appointed to head the task force.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to Premier Darrell Dexter supporting the initiative of a task force on rural Nova Scotia and requesting that Victoria County be placed on the list of areas to be visited. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Jessica Farrell, Strait Area Transit, be invited to make a presentation to Council in January. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he has had some informal discussion with Inverness County Councillors and Mayor Cecil Clarke, CBRM, concerning the island Councils meeting. There are a number of issues in common such as the island wide RDA, wind energy issues, etc.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that contact be made with all the Councils on Cape Breton Island concerning a joint meeting which Victoria County would host to discuss issues and concerns. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether the application for financial assistance was available on the website, as the Royal Canadian Legion in Ingonish wish to submit an application. The application is on the website.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of an unsightly premise in his district. Nothing has been done to remedy the situation.

Sandy Hudson advised that there are three outstanding files on unsightly premises which he has referred to the Solicitor for recommendation on the proper procedure to be followed dealing with these properties.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the former Rankin School property in Iona as being in unsightly condition. This property will be placed on the list for inspection.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that \$20,000.00 was approved for Ski Cape Smokey Society in the budget and they would now like to access this funding. He presented a letter from ECBC on the status of their application.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the \$20,000.00 funding allocated for Ski Cape Smokey Society be released. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the installation of the street light at 37890 Cabot Trail, Ingonish Beach, be approved. Motion carried.

Lyle Donovan, EMC, is attempting to start up a search and rescue group in Victoria County and it was indicated that 26 volunteers have submitted their names to date.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Council support the efforts to establish a search and rescue unit in Victoria County. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Budge indicated that the Community Services Caseworker position in the Ingonish office has been reduced from a 5 day per week position to a 3 week per day position. With all the EI problems in the northern area, this is not sufficient.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Community Services requesting that the Community

Services Caseworker position in the Ingonish office return to a five day per week position. Motion carried.

Councillor Budge questioned on when water would be installed at the Enviro-Depot in Neil's Harbour. Sandy Hudson advised that water should be installed relatively soon.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan indicated that Elaine MacKenzie, Job Developer, Department of Community Services, may have funding available to assist those short on hours for EI. Councillor Buchanan was advised to contact the CAO to discuss this matter.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on whether there was anything back on the water testing for Bay St. Lawrence. Sandy Hudson advised that was not.

Discussion took place on the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water System and the drilled well at Halfway Brook. The water quality and content is being investigated and the work done to date has been covered under PCAP (Provincial Capital Assistance Program) funding.

A question was raised on the water meter readings and whether the meters have been checked for accuracy to determine that the water used is in line with the water produced. This matter is still being investigated.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis advised of the death of and recognized the life of a resident of his district, Stephen MacDermid. Mr. MacDermid touched the lives of many of the youth of the Municipality through his coaching of both soccer and hockey.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether community halls could be exempt from taxation. Sandy Hudson advised of the present by-law concerning tax exemptions and that it would have to be amended to include community halls. Mr. Hudson was requested to look into this matter.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Council MacNeil, that a street light be ordered for installation at 729 Tarbot Road, Tarbot. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that a street light he ordered almost 2 years ago has not yet been installed. Deputy Warden Patterson and Councillor Buchanan indicated that street lights they had ordered have not been installed to date. This matter will be investigated.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of vacant land owned by the Municipality and the possibility of developing same. In particular he made mention of a 200 acre lot at Rear Little

River. The possibility of developing land for agriculture purposes was discussed. The Municipality owns a number of undeveloped parcels throughout the County.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the feasibility of developing vacant land owned by the Municipality be investigated. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant felt that the Municipality should be paying more attention to the provincial staff reductions occurring in the County. He mentioned that a position vacated due to retirement at the Department of Natural Resources has not been replaced and two impending retirements are not to be filled either.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Charlie Parker, Minister of Natural Resources, inquiring on the reduction of DNR staff positions within the County and the future plans for these positions. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that as a new Councillor, he was seeking advice on whether he could hold community meetings. He was advised that he could do so provided he did not commit the County to anything.

Councillor Grant also indicated that he is interested surveys done regarding out-migration and attracting newcomers and he questioned whether he could pursue this issue. He was advised that he could investigate this matter and that CBCEDA has conducted surveys in this regard. Eileen Oldford would be the contact in this regard.

District #1

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a street light order be placed for installation of a street light at 3420 Washabuck Road, Washabuck. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that at present the Palliative care position in the southern area of the County is a .5 position and it was felt that this should be a full-time position.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to the Cape Breton District Health Authority requesting that the palliative care position in the southern area of the Municipality be increased from a .5 position to a full-time position. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the issue of the rumored 15 minute wait time being proposed for the ferries at Little Narrows and Englishtown. These proposed wait times are unacceptable.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Maurice Smith, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, and John Majchrowicz, Manager, Marine Services, DOTIR, opposing any changes to the wait times at the Victoria County ferries. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil advised Council of a recent meeting concerning the Little Narrows Water. Residents are displeased with the high water rates they are charged. Victoria County water rates are the highest in the Province and seniors on fixed incomes and young families find it difficult to pay these rates.

Sandy Hudson advised that Council has previously agreed to conduct a water rate study after each municipal election – every four years. This matter will be further addressed during the New Business section of Council.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Pitu'paq invoice for this fiscal year has not been paid to date. He is to forward a copy of the invoice for payment.

Nova Scotia Power have scheduled a second round of meetings this fall, to discuss Nova Scotia Power issues and are proposing that a meeting be held in Sydney on November 28, 2012, the location to be determined. Council will be provided with an update on location when it is determined.

Councillor MacNeil requested permission to attend the Ken Simpson Lecture Series in Halifax on November 29, 2012. He was authorized to attend.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that the development of alternative energy is critical and he felt that an Alternate Energy Committee should be established to investigate this matter further.

Deputy Warden Patterson suggested that as a first step would be to review the Alternative Energy Strategy Study done for Victoria County. He also felt it would be prudent to include members of the public on the committee.

Discussion took place and it was mentioned that COMFIT Administrator for the Province, Krystal Therien, is available to come and explain the role of COMFIT to Council. Contact is to be made to see if she would be available to come to Council in January, 2013.

An RFP is presently being advertised for tidal energy throughout Cape Breton. Further discussion took place and it was determined that this issue will be a priority for Victoria County.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence advising that the deadline for nominations for the 2012 Diamond Jubilee Awards has been extended to December 31, 2012.
2. Excerpt from the Nova Scotia Legislature Hansard from Keith Bain, MLA, congratulating Warden Bruce Morrison and Deputy Warden Fraser Patterson on their election.
3. Request from Mary Louise Bernard for sponsorship in producing and publishing her book – “The Indian Maiden Story – Legend of Maple Syrup”.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that Mary Louise Bernard’s request for sponsorship be referred to budget talks. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

WATER RATE STUDY

The matter of a new water rate study for the Victoria County Water Utility was discussed.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a new water rate study for the Victoria County Water Utility be undertaken. Motion carried.

It is hoped to be able to complete the rate study so the new rates can be billed for either April 1 or July 1, 2013.

Discussion took place on whether fire departments on our water systems should be charged for water. At present Ingonish Beach is not billed, but all other departments on the water supplies are.

Deputy Warden Patterson made mention of the fact that the Ross Ferry Fire Department recently drilled a new well at a cost in excess of \$4,000.00. Fire Departments in areas where there are no water systems must bear the cost of locating and installing water services.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that fire departments not be charged water rates.

Those voting in favour of the motion were Councillors MacNeil, Buchanan, Budge, Dauphinee and Warden Morrison.

Those voting against the motion were Deputy Warden Patterson and Councillors MacInnis and Grant.

Motion carried 5 to 3.

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The topic of life insurance for volunteer fire fighters was discussed. At present fire department members are provided coverage when carrying out fire department related duties. There is a policy available that will provide 24/7 coverage when the renewal of this policy is up in January, 2013. Discussion took place.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that coverage for fire departments members be continued as it is at present, while carrying out normal fire department duties. Motion carried.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Sandy Hudson presented the 5 year Capital Investment Plan for the fiscal years 2012/2013 to 2016/2017 for approval.

Mr. Hudson presented the items included in the budget. For the current year the Court House renovations are included in the budget. In 2014/2014 the purchase of an excavator for the Baddeck Transfer Station at a cost of \$175,000.00 is included, as well as a C & D Disposal Cell which is guesstimated to be in the vicinity of \$400,00.00. In years following the Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret's Village Water System and the Dingwall Water extension to Cape North are included.

A lengthy discussion took place on the C & D disposal and how to proceed with regard to same.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the 5 year Capital Investment Plan for the Municipality of the County of Victoria be approved. Motion carried.

BORROWING RESOLUTION

Sandy Hudson advised that a borrowing resolution is required for the Municipality's 1/3 share of the Baddeck Water System. The amount of borrowing required is \$1.9 million dollars.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that authorization be given to negotiate a borrowing resolution for the Municipality in the amount of \$1.9 million dollars. Motion carried.

COUNCIL/STAFF CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Council/Staff Christmas Party will be held in the MacKenzie Building, Gaelic College, St. Ann's on Friday, November 30, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

All Council confirmed their and their guest's attendance.

CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

Sandy Hudson advised that a requirement for the Gas Tax Funding is that a Climate Change Plan be developed. A preliminary plan is to be submitted by April 1, 2013, with the final plan submitted by December 31, 2013.

Mr. Hudson advised that he would like to talk with Richmond and Inverness Counties and the Town of Port Hawkesbury about combining efforts to complete this initiative. He will contact the adjoining municipal units in this regard.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

Sandy Hudson advised that the Physical Activity Strategy will be presented to Council for approval at the regular session on December 10, 2012. This will be the only item for presentation at this meeting.

BADDECK CHRISTMAS PARADE

The Baddeck Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 1, 2012. Councillors are to meet at Baddeck Academy by 1:30 p.m. The theme of the Municipality's float will be the 75th Anniversary of the Gaelic College and the College have kindly donated the cost of kilt rental for the Council members who will dress in kilts. Councillors who have not been received their fitting for the kilts are to do so as soon as possible.

CONGRATULATIONS

Sandy Hudson advised that Donald (Bucky) Carmichael and his wife are proud parents of a baby boy born last week. Council offered their congratulations to Bucky and his wife, Jennifer.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO